

LOG HOME CONSTRUCTION

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS & DECISIONS

Having been in the industry since 1990, the best advice we can give potential clients is to research your options and know which log construction style fits your needs and wants. When you find the style you want, then do your homework on the company that offers those products.

Be warned, the industry is confusing. Log home companies have evolved into smart marketers by branding their log style with fancy names and confusing data. It's crucial you find a representative you deem as reliable and experienced. Only then, will you be able to understand what you are comparing.

To keep your homework simple, let's look at the first choice to be made:
Do you like Full log or Half log construction?

FULL LOG CONSTRUCTION

Full log homes are built such that the log on the outside of the house is the same log that's on the inside. The shell of a full log home can be built at a company's log yard but then disassembled and transported to the jobsite. More typically, it's a milled full log product built on site by a log home builder.

Skilled or master craftsmen should be building these homes, as there is a great degree of experience and knowledge needed to keep a full log home airtight and allow for settling.

You need to understand that full log construction requires special accommodations for mechanicals (electrical wiring, plumbing, etc.) that's why you want a skilled craftsmen to build a full log home.

HALF LOG CONSTRUCTION

Half log construction is where cut logs are applied over conventional framing (exterior, interior or both) to replicate the look of full log construction. With many corner option choices, the look can be indistinguishable from full log without the settling issues. One of the greatest advantages with half log construction is the high energy efficiency of the home. In addition, half logs provide complete design flexibility. Your interior walls can include logs, drywall, plaster or any combination.

Half logs allow for mechanicals to run conventionally avoiding the need for special accommodations. Installation is comparable to hanging any siding.
Bottom Line: Half log construction can be done by any custom home builder with a little advice and training from a good log home company.

Once you have decided on the log construction, it's easier to move forward with the next round of decisions.

MACHINED (MILLED) LOGS VS HANDPEELED LOGS

A machined log is manufactured with exact dimensions and profiles. All the logs are milled to a uniform diameter and look pretty much the same.

Handpeeled logs have been peeled but their natural waness and irregular contours are maintained on the face of the log. The character of the wood remains visible.



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CORNER STYLES

You need to consider your preference in corner style. Corner construction is the extension of the corner formed by the joining of two log walls. Some examples are: Butt & Pass, Partial Cope, Saddle Notch, Vertical Log, and Vertical Square. (We can show you examples at our model office.) These corner styles are available for both full log and half log construction.



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*Typically, corner style decisions are based on personal preference.
Two examples from left to right: Butt & Pass and Vertical log.*

AIR-DRIED VS. KILN-DRIED WOOD

Logs naturally contain a great deal of moisture when first cut and peeled. It is critical that this moisture is removed to a point where the logs are stable and further drying is unlikely to create settling and cracking in your new home.

With log home construction, the logs are either air dried or kiln-dried.

Air-Dried Logs are dried slowly by Mother Nature. Some companies let the fresh cut logs sit in the open air to dry naturally. The logs can be stacked with spacers allowing the moisture content to naturally come down as the log dries. This process requires at least one year per inch of thickness. Air-dried wood tends to have more shrinkage and settling than kiln dried.

Kiln-Dried Logs are placed in a kiln, which heats the log to a temperature high enough to dry the inner core. (The kiln controls air movement, temperature and humidity.) Since the outside of the log dries faster than the inside, steam maintains the optimum moisture level of the log's outer layer, while the inner core continues to dry. This method allows the log to dry uniformly.

Kiln-dried logs are more resistant to twisting and cracking because of the consistent drying rate. (The variable moisture content in air-dried logs leads to increased shrinking, warping and cracking during and after construction.) All logs shrink during construction due to compression and moisture adjustments, however, kiln drying maintains the dimensional stability of the log and keeps shrinkage to a minimum.

Benefits to kiln drying include:

- Sterilizing the log; killing most mold spores, fungus and insect larva
- Minimizing pitch seepage (sap-like material remaining in the log)
- Minimizing log shrinkage
- Dramatically reduces the weight of the log

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Be realistic about your budget.

Your budget will dictate what style of log construction you can afford.

Trust the company you are dealing with.

Visit their manufacturing facility or supplier's facility, their log models and past client's homes.

Understand your quotes.

Ask the log home company to give you a detailed proposal that clearly outlines the materials and professional and construction services to be provided. (Be sure to understand if you are getting the material package pricing or turnkey pricing.)

There is much more to learn and we have years of experience to share with you. Call us to understand the Stevens Point Log Homes difference. We have a fantastic reputation for building quality homes with unmatched service.

Call us today at (877) 646-8564.

Good luck on this exciting journey.

We hope to hear from you soon.



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*Stevens Point Log Homes is located in Central Wisconsin.
The Model Office is open for visitors from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Monday through Friday. Appointments are available outside of these
weekday hours and on weekends.*